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Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) An isolated nucleic acid selected from the group consisting of:
 - (a) a nucleic acid comprising the coding region of a nucleotide sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NOs:1 and 11;
 - (b) a nucleic acid encoding a protein comprising an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NOs:2 and 12;
 - (c) a nucleic acid encoding a protein comprising a modified sequence of an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NOs:2 and 12, wherein the protein encoded by said nucleic acid comprises a bHLH domain, functions as a bHLH type transcription factor, and differs from SEQ ID NO:2 or 12, respectively, by mutation at no more than 100 positions;
 - (d) a nucleic acid that (i) hybridizes in 6x SSC (0.9 M sodium chloride, 0.09 M sodium citrate), 0.5% SDS, 10 mM EDTA, 5x Denhardt's solution (0.1% (w/v) Ficoll, 0.1% (w/v) polyvinylpyrrolidone, 0.1% (w/v) BSA), 10 mg/ml denatured salmon sperm DNA at 60°C [[60°]] to a probe consisting of the complement of a nucleotide sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NOs:1 and 11, (ii) is at least 90% identical to SEQ ID NO:1 or 11, and (iii) encodes a protein that comprises a bHLH domain and functions as a bHLH type transcription factor; and
 - (e) a nucleic acid encoding a partial peptide of a protein selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NOs:2 and 12 that differs from the sequence of one of SEQ ID NO:2 or 12 at no more than 100 positions.